

(*Danthonia sericea*), oakleach (*Aureolaria* sp.), and the rare Greenland sandwort (*Minuartia groenlandica*). Vines such as common greenbrier (*Smilax rotundifolia*) and glaucous greenbrier (*Smilax glauca*) may also be common. In the piedmont, Pine--Oak/Heaths may grade to Dry Oak--Hickory, Chestnut Oak Forest, or Low Elevation Rocky Summit community types.

Canada Hemlock Forest

Though fairly common in the Blue Ridge, this community is rare in the Piedmont, occurring only on very steep, north-facing slopes that are sheltered, mesic, and very cool. The Canada hemlock populations that occur on these uncommon sites are at the eastern and low elevation edge of the species' range. The Stokes County examples are botanically interesting in having species of primarily montane distribution as well as species of acidic (low pH) and circumneutral (high pH) soils. In addition to Canada hemlock, the canopy may support scattered white oak, yellow poplar, red oak, American beech, cucumbertree, hop-hornbeam, and sweet birch. A sparse, shady understory may support those species as well as black locust, Fraser magnolia, red maple, witch-hazel, American holly, flowering dogwood, chestnut oak, and the rare mountain camellia (*Stewartia ovata*). Shrubs are quite sparse and may include great rhododendron (*Rhododendron maximum*), Catawba rhododendron (*Rhododendron catawbiense*), mapleleaf viburnum (*Viburnum acerifolium*), and buffalo-nut (*Pyrularia pubera*). Typical species of the sparse, heavily-shaded herb layer may include marginal woodfern (*Dryopteris marginalis*), maidenhair fern (*Adiantum pedatum*), rock-cap fern (*Polypodium virginianum*), partridgeberry (*Mitchella repens*), heartleaf (*Hexastylis* sp.), heartleaf aster (*Aster divaricatus*), Appalachian bellflower (*Campanula divaricata*), mountain spleenwort (*Asplenium montanum*), devil's-bit (*Chamaelirium luteum*), galax (*Galax urceolata*), and others. The community often grades to Dry Oak--Hickory Forest, Dry-Mesic Oak--Hickory Forest, or Mesic Mixed Hardwood Forest. All of the known examples in Stokes County grade downslope to the rare Piedmont Calcareous Cliff community.

Piedmont/Coastal Plain Heath Bluff

This somewhat uncommon community occurs on steep slopes and bluffs on thin, acidic soils along streams. It is a shrub-dominated community with only a sparse tree canopy. Soil conditions are fairly dry, yet the location of the community along sheltered stream corridors produces a somewhat moist environment. The characteristically dense shrub layer is usually dominated by mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*), though great rhododendron (*Rhododendron maximum*) or Catawba rhododendron (*Rhododendron catawbiense*) may dominate. Other shrubs may include horse-sugar (*Symplocos tinctoria*) and blueberries (*Vaccinium* spp.). The tree canopy is sparse and open, with typical species such as chestnut oak, Virginia pine, witch-hazel, sourwood, red maple, scarlet oak, and downy serviceberry. Herbs are sparse beneath the dense shrubs, but may include galax (*Galax urceolata*), pipsissewa (*Chimaphila maculata*), teaberry (*Gaultheria procumbens*), heartleaf (*Hexastylis* spp.), trailing arbutus (*Epigaea repens*), and partridgeberry (*Mitchella repens*). The community typically grades to Dry Oak--Hickory Forest, Dry-Mesic Oak--Hickory Forest, Mesic Mixed Hardwood Forest, or to cliff community types.